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IDENTIFICATION OF APPLIED MORAL PHILOSOPHY ACCENTUATING ECOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

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This paper endorses the assumption that in ecological philosophy and ethics we overcome the barriers between “two cultures” by means of mutual communication among theorists from both cultures and by means of their quest for a common language. In this quest, the “eternal truths” in philosophy are inherently recombined with novel ideas, resulting from experimental research and natural scientists increasingly change the focus of their research. The aim of this paper is to outline the main line of argumentation and to provide a certain causal tale, which can serve as an explanation. We follow two areas of the research problem: 1. brief identification of applied moral philosophy accentuating ecological reflections; 2. importance of ecological science for identification, understanding and solving of the ecological problem.

Key words: ecological philosophy, ecological science, ecological problem.

Identifikacija primijenjene moralne filozofije s naglaskom na ekološkim refleksijama. Ovaj članak potvrđuje pretpostavku da barijere između “dviju kultura” u ekološkoj filozofiji i etici prevladavamo sredstvima međusobne komunikacije među teoretičarima obiju kultura, te sredstvima njihove potrage za zajedničkim jezikom. U toj se potrazi “vječne istine” filozofije inherentno rekombiniraju s novim idejama koje proizlaze iz eksperimentalnih istraživanja, gdje prirodosnanstvenici sve brže mijenjaju fokus svojih istraživanja. Cilj članka je da se ocrti glavna linija argumentacije i da se ponudi određena kauzalna priča koja može služiti kao objašnjenje. Pratimo dva područja unutar problema koji je predmetom istraživanja: 1. kratka identifikacija primijenjene moralne filozofije s naglaskom na ekološkim refleksijama; 2. važnost ekološke znanosti za identifikaciju, razumijevanje i rješavanje ekološkog problema.

Ključne riječi: ekološka filozofija, ekološka znanost, ekološki problem.

OUTLINE OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY ACCENTUATING ECOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS – ECOLOGICAL ETHICS

In 1991, John Brockman (editor of the collection of essays *The Next Fifty Years: Science in the First Half of the Twenty-First Century*. 2004; and *The Third Culture*. 2008) published a study called *The Third Culture*, in which he contemplated a new type of culture, represented by those scientists and thinkers in the empirical world

who render visible the deeper meanings of our lives, redefining who and what we really are. What was traditionally called science is recently becoming “public culture”.

The author believes that human nature does not undergo significant changes but science does change increasingly and this change alters the world irreversibly...science thus becomes a big story” [1:8]. Scientists working in the field of natural and technical sciences employ language which is understood by their colleagues from other disciplines.

“Third-culture thinkers are new public intellectuals” [1:9]. Their aim is to determine current state of scientific research which would be comprehensible not only for members of scientific community but also for general public. Perhaps the most important task of the “third culture” is to lay emphasis on:

the fact that everyone should talk about the same thing, about a quasi-object they have all created, about the object-discourse-nature-society, whose new properties astound us all and whose network extends...by way of chemistry, law, the state, the economy and satellites [2:189].

In this regard, there arises a question about the role, played in the process of “rendering visible... and talking about the same thing” by moral philosophical reflection, in this particular case by moral – philosophical reflection on the ecological problem. In this reflection, the answer to the question about our place and role in “a set of practices”, about our place in the interrelationships between “nature and culture” and about who and what we really are, is of crucial importance.

As a natural consequence of well-founded stipulations that metaphysical, epistemological, axiological and ethical conclusions cannot be derived directly from ecological science, the reflections of many scientists coincide with the view of S. Weinberg (a Nobel laureate in Physics) who contended that the development of philosophy is irrelevant to natural sciences. Weinberg asserts that he observes with suspicion all the attempts, since Aristotle’s time, to build a moral-philosophical or an aesthetic system and “with even more suspicion, he observes the attempts to prove

these things” [3:49]. It seems that from the position of philosophy, contemporary science will not be given any instructions on how and what to investigate. However, S. Weinberg reminds us that even in science, “there is no clear and universal scientific method and all attempts to establish such a method, since the time of Francis Bacon, have failed to describe the way science and scientists really work” [3:49]. Moreover, a substantial part of conclusions we can arrive at by means of scientific analyses are necessarily interim conclusions.

At the same time, neither in the field of philosophy nor in the field of science, we have at our disposal an “ideal theory”, which would clearly lead from metaphysical or ontological doctrine to scientific theorizing, moral and political principles and an overall view of the world, in which the place of human beings and the value of human life would be clearly established. If we do not want to mark time in the fields of philosophy and ethics, we should not be waiting patiently for ideal theories of ecological science. Passive role is neither necessary nor desirable for philosophers to assume.

Ecological science as a genuine *architectonic science or science of synthesis* is plagued by various ruptures, stretching along its subdisciplinary, methodological and philosophical boundaries. Despite this fact, or perhaps due to this fact, there is a huge space for research. Undoubtedly in this sphere, practical philosophy may benefit from consistent conceptual criticism and second-order analysis, in which the role of ethics is irreplaceable. As it was proposed by K. deLaplante [4], in this respect the contribution of philosophy and ethics to the development of ecological science and to their mutual interrelationships may include the following:

- elaboration of arguments for and against various interpretations of ecological theory
- study of strategies promoting productive dialogue between and among otherwise isolated ecological subdisciplines
- study of the role of individual and social values in the practice of ecological science and in the process of development and evaluation of ecological theories.

From the above mentioned facts it follows that the challenges posed to the project of ecological ethics bear on general philosophical questions, concerning the essence of ecological science and ecological knowledge. This is due to the fact that ecological ethics represents a “special case” in the field of ethics, which transgresses the framework of interpersonal relations, which was until recently the traditional framework of ethics. It concerns the relationships of human beings towards other living beings and even towards inanimate natural objects. It becomes an attempt at rendering visible the deeper meaning of life and it provides a new view of our place in the natural world by asking the question: *what do we have to know and how are we supposed to act with regard to the ecological dimension of understanding of our existence* and especially what is the way of life we should strive for. Ecological ethics poses questions about the world in which we should live and in which we want to live (at least with the aim that these questions will trigger further evolutionary progress of our moral consciousness by refusing “violent relations that we maintained with other natures-cultures” [2:24]. It asks about and contemplates *the values of human life, the values of nonhuman life and the values of life as such*. On theoretical level, ecological ethics is a mode of *application of normative ethics* to a certain set of practical (problematic) issues and it represents *a new way of justification and application in general*. This process is not confined any more only to justification by means of certain theoretical principle or concept applied to a particular problematic area but it must take into account *the context of*

particular problematic area, situation or case which is (if necessary) the sphere of theoretical derivation. Context is decisive because it is not possible to understand inquiry without paying attention to the context, in which it is conducted. Subsequent justification is not possible without context of application. Strictly speaking: inquiry is inherently context-bound because justification is intrinsically context-bound. From this point of view, the distinction between research and practice is problematic. The new form of justification and application stems from the dynamic development of science, scientific knowledge and technology and their impact, or in other words from the transformational changes in the natural world and in the world of culture. Although ecological ethics is ultimately a theoretical statement, a process of cumulating rational incentives, knowledge and empirical studies, i.e. *relevant facts* (practical logos), it enables us to act on the basis of *kata ton orthon logon* (according to correct judgement) in a series of events for which we lack any morally binding rules. It is an expression of the effort to reveal the architecture of and the interrelations within social networks of the living world, to reveal the network structure of mutually connected levels of biosphere, etc.

H.-G. Gadamer introduced the idea, drawing on practical philosophy elaborated by Aristotle, which is of crucial importance for ecological ethics. Gadamer's reasoning bears on Aristotle's philosophy not only in his identification of what should be deemed as correct but also in his insistence that the central role of philosophical ethics and moral behavior is concretization of the general and application to a particular situation.

Gadamer's reasoning is integral to our conception of ecological ethics because "theoretical statements about practical good...are obtained from the field of practical experience", or eventually relate to practice as their preliminary condition [5:105].

Ecological ethics is the starting point for the productive effort to understand *how real world really works*. Its path and direction drifts toward understanding of the amazing complexity of both the living world and the natural world and in understanding the problems that are the main focus of research of scientists and ethicists. Such understanding is possible on the assumption that "there will be a new growth of interest in the interdisciplinary approach in the Renaissance style", in the style of ecological synergy or complementarity "of the penetration of science into the psychical world and the social world" [6:98]. On this ground, in its pragmatic usage, rationality meets morality.

At this point, there arises another question: how can we enforce the discourse we need if we know that ethics works as a challenge (and at the same time as an impairment) for the organizing principles of science or for science in general? How are we to accomplish this task, if we are aware of the tension contained in the inherent confrontation between knowledge and evaluation, in the dispute over the source of values and morality, in the dispute over the faculty of science and philosophy to mediate legitimizing knowledge in the situation, when "facts are uncertain, values in dispute stakes high and decisions are urgent" [7:254].

At this juncture, let us introduce a preliminary remark. On the one hand, we can intuitively feel that the distance between the picture of the world conveyed by scientific theories (i.e. what is) and morality, responsibility and dignity of an individual (i.e. what should be) is so immense that

humanity is more likely to tackle scientific problems (i.e. problems of technology and natural sciences) than moral and ethical problems. In consequence, humanity is more likely to deal with its own rational creativity aimed at obtaining knowledge about nature than with the ways of inhabiting the natural world. On the other hand, as Merryl Wyn Davies puts it, regardless of what scientists tell us, science became *an unrestricted quest for sense*. Scientific theories create images of the world which are systematizing and which can anticipate and render explanations.

Unlike other human activities, science does not aim at changing the world but rather at *changing our conception about the world*. This is a serious consequence because the way we perceive the world determines the way we act. In science, the quest for sense is connected to the capacity to explain by using a repertoire of ideas from the field of natural and moral philosophy in all the variety and richness that has been generated throughout the history of thought. For instance, ecology can hardly manage without normative judgements about what is important in existence and what is important for life and why; in this respect ecology and philosophy intersect and thus mutual interaction of these two disciplines becomes necessary.

Simply put, in the world dominated by science where science becomes our adviser, we have to verify the meanings that science and its theories present to us because they have an impact on the quality of the most intimate spheres of our everyday life.

If we base our reasoning on the assumption that nature as an existential habitat of the human and the nonhuman is irreplaceable, it logically follows that polarizations, constructions of so-called binary oppositions, centrism and in consequence normative universalizations either of the human or the nonhuman which remain present in the discourse of particular

problems, appear to be unproductive. (In this context, the above mentioned existential habitat should be understood as material and ecological supportive basis or other independent existence upon which we are dependent – its ontological status represents the axiological basis for the ethical dimension).

However, they are consequences of the western rationalist hyperseparation of human identity from nature and supercilious or hegemonistic tendencies. In this paper, we outline possible weakening of both conceptual reduction and the above mentioned hyperseparation of human identity from nature pursuing the vision of ecological synergy [8]. The foundation of this ecological synergy may be summarized as follows: *the act of (re)situating of people from the ecological viewpoint* (which is evidently urgent and becomes an issue of foresight, associated with the knowledge about the natural world) and *(re)situation of the nonhuman from the ethical viewpoint* (which is the task of ethics, associated with inhabiting and evaluating the natural world). Both tasks are synergically intertwined and cannot be accomplished in isolation [9].

In our reflection, we uphold the attitude of moderation and restraint towards the unrestricted enthusiasm and categorical denial of modern, non-modern, premodern and postmodern etc. project of reason, culture, nature and technology. One of the first steps of this moderation is the identification of the range of moral criteria and criteria of value: what these criteria are, what they are not and what they should be like (in terms of assuming attitudes towards important issues concerning pro-naturally acceptable standard of “good life”).

Urgent calls for appropriate (biophilic) technology, evaluative science, animal rights, inherent value of nature and nonhuman entities, environmental activities etc. sound unconvincing when the

reason/nature dichotomy is substituted for other dichotomies (e.g. nature/reason). I. Dowbiggin [10] points out that even so-called multicultural projects celebrating the regions of the world with common occurrence of anarchy, mutilation of women, tribal massacres, violence motivated by religion and feminist definition of Judaism as crime against women due to the patriarchal tone of the Old Testament do not put in a bad light the western industrial-informational world, taking pride in science and technology, because western world hardly has the monopoly on immorality and injustice.

The project of ecological synergy is construed on the basis of metatheoretical pluralism. Metatheoretical pluralism is open to prospective cooperation of divergent ethical theories on a common moral project. For example, ecofeminists and ecological holists can work together pursuing a common interest – preservation of the same natural habitats, even if the underlying demands motivating their actions are different. An important question is whether metatheoretical pluralism guides theoretical reflections toward a particular type of postmodern relativism. Various interpretations of ecological pragmatism [11] indicate that it is not the case: any type of pluralism is incommensurable with functional and critical ecological philosophy. It can provide the foundation and guidance for those types of theory development, which are necessary in a particular stage of development of ecological philosophy. The pragmatic requirement is clear: the aim is to find functional solutions to ecological problems. Another inspirational source for the project of ecological synergy is the multicentric vision as interpreted by A. Weston [12], which reflects our experience of cultural and natural divergence without complete denial of universality.

ECOLOGICAL ETHICS AS INTERSECTION OF PRACTICAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH

For centuries, humans have made every effort to understand the world around us and the way how nature functions on the basis of its building substrates. We were and we still are “seduced by the temptation of simplicity...by the effort to explain complex phenomena by means of something simpler” [13:25]. We are often misled by this temptation into a blind epistemological alley which offers no point of departure for understanding collective coherent phenomena (with their emergent features). In science, there is currently the tendency to focus our attention on smaller details (specialization) and the effort to find unity in diversity (to build interrelationships between scientific disciplines which are conventionally separate for the time being) is considered almost a sacrilege. “Science begins with a quest for simplicity and *simplex sigillum veri* (simplicity is the seal of the truth) seems to be one of its fundamental devices. This logical simplicity is, however, a *terminus ad quem*, not a *terminus a quo*. It is an end, not a beginning...” [14:337]. Even if simplified models, inadequate descriptions and “rough” representation of real world are easy to analyze and even easier “to teach and to learn”, they provide only a very obscure picture of reality. N. Cartwright (*How Laws of Physics Lie*) rejects fundamental theories that could provide a more profound account of reality (the world is so complex that no system of laws can describe it), because – *there is no better reality beside the reality we have to hand*.

Many natural scientists as well as scientists working in the fields of social sciences or humanities who opted for an alternative approach, consisting in the so-called integration of conventionally separate sciences and disciplines and building

interrelationships between them seem to understand *terminus ad quem* as a moment of subversion of the modern “idol of reductionism”.

Nature cannot tell us how to act unless there is a way to find out what nature indeed is and what it “says” – a way to approach nature interpreted by science in particular social-historical context, in a certain intersubjective critical appraisal. In this respect, P. Feyerabend critically reflected on the so-called immunization monoeuvres of western rationalists when distinguishing between basic and applied science: ruptures, disturbances and destruction are caused by those, who apply science; scientists – theorists are without guarantee!

Nature or at least its substantial part undoubtedly shows signs of transformation by human activity. All transformations of nature by human beings are transformations of the *substrate*, which exists prior to our activities. Natural world can no longer be regarded as a space for interpersonal interaction or as a neutral vector between human moral agent and human moral patient. This substrate is the nature studied by natural sciences and in a broader context, it is reflected on by philosophy or moral philosophy. In the philosophical study of nature, theoretical attention is shifted to the study of ecological rupture, human existence, nonhuman entities (the so-called ontologically different dimensions of existence) and their “existential” networks. Precisely at this point, it is important to appeal to *the social study of science* (excluding narrowly conceived epistemological analyses which do not go beyond the level of conceptual interpretation), because it implies that it is exactly *this* nature, nature described by biology, ecology, chemistry, physics...that can be accessed via *practical and socially organized activity*.

Hence even “substrate” requires transformational social practice in order to manifest itself, or in order to enable us to contemplate *an action* leading to radical correction based on knowledge of the issue (we should not only *imagine* that we can *imagine* the way to correction). From this argumentation it follows that although the world of culture and the natural world are “two ontologically completely different zones” [2:23], they are inextricably linked in a *hybrid-synergic way*.

The new alliance and the new dialogue between man and nature, announced by I. Prigogin [15] justifies us to focus our attention in the field of moral philosophy on the aspects of being and knowing related to the problems that were until recently only partial and were not reflected. The new dialogue becomes a communication channel of new understanding of the complexity of nature and contextuality of its interpretation, which quite naturally (from the point of view of evolution of science and scientific theories, or cultural evolution) escaped our attention - knowledge and comprehension, or they were not even outlined.

The new alliance, which provides access to dual hermeneutics, entitled to cooperation and joint decision making of the world of culture and natural world, constantly guides discourses into contexts that it analyses. Social sciences are constituted by a lay actor and metalanguage of sciences, or by constant sliding between them. We talk about *advanced modernity* [16] associated with reflexivity and detraditionalisation. Within the study of ecological ethics, this phenomenon requires more attention, which has been paid to a certain stage of discourse so far (it is the discourse of new problems which did not interfere with the framework of ethics and philosophy before). Research focuses on a whole range of (at first sight) divergent topics and incompatible areas, including the

following: hermeneutics of nature (the problem of synergic becoming in nature); phenomenon of waste material as an integrant part of modern society; project of sustainable development and its radicalization in form of sustainable life; new kinds of technology and a new type of normative coordination of interrelations between science, technology and value preferences; *pro-naturally* oriented axiology; and last but not least, expansion of traditional western ethical theory or in other words destabilizing the demarcation lines in this sphere by creating alternative axiological, normative and moral-philosophical concepts that are either directly or indirectly connected to scientific concepts, which adumbrates the implication of this “incompatible” sphere – strategy that can hardly be solved exclusively by “ethical means”. This strategy, inter alia, transgresses the ethical horizon and requires philosophical context, in other words, it has *intradisciplinary* character in terms of philosophical approaches and perspectives. In the research of ecological ethics, interests of philosophical anthropology, ontology, epistemology, social philosophy and axiology overlap multicentrically in the field of ethics. This philosophical intradisciplinary field is saturated in an *interdisciplinary* way by studying relations, information bases and heuristic inspirations coming from other scientific disciplines, in particular ecological science serving as a model database, which motivates inquiry, oriented towards multidisciplinary and integration. These orientations reveal the contexts of crucial cultural, social and political shifts and enable to discover demarcation lines and regulation mechanisms for endangering emergent situations by means of building a synergy, which bridges science and human situation, cognitive construct and knowing beings within “ecology of knowledge”, knowledge and appraisal. By means of “interconnecting

flashes of light, regardless of what direction they are coming from” [17:185] or by capturing the fine fibre “which connects heaven, industry, texts, souls and moral law” [2:17].

Ecological ethics is a polydiscourse, which considerably broadens the scope of theoretical and applied ethics with wide research agendas, traversing their well-established fields. Ecological ethics represents a new field, employing *a specific and direct mode of ecological research and management*. This approach should quite naturally draw from moral theories and principles, which have implanted themselves in theoretical ethics, applied ethics, bioethics, animal ethics and environmental ethics. On the whole, it has a broader framework and it integrates a much broader sphere of interest than any other of the above mentioned subdisciplines of theoretical and applied ethics. The new research agenda (which is interdisciplinary in nature) may be effective under the condition that it will stem from organized and constant discourses, traversing natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and conservation spheres. Generally speaking, it is no longer exclusively the field for reflections of philosophers and scientists. It is rather *an intersection of practical and professional ethical research*, striving for tangible results in terms of conceptual contribution to the solution of moral-philosophical questions in ecology as well as reflection on and management of biodiversity.

This new area should include complex moral-philosophical framework, which would assist ecologists and biodiversity managers in identification and assessment of the value dimension of problem situations and in coping with moral demands that they have to face in their research and conservationist activities.

From the above considerations it follows that when it comes to solving problematic spheres in ecological ethics,

there can hardly be found any uniform or universal points of departure or answers to posed questions. What really matters is that such questions are at least voiced. It is highly probable that they will continue to be voiced during further development of ecological ethics, not only by theorists from this field but also by others, who follow and participate in “the story” of ecological ethics either directly (theorists from a wide range of social sciences, natural scientists and technicians) or “externally”, or by employing a different perspective (community of well-informed and responsible citizens).

If we start with the assumption that one of the most significant differences between human beings and other species is the fact, that human beings have at their disposal science, technology and technical practice, we can conclude that contemporary turbulent development of science and unprecedented speed of technical changes reveal a particularly strong and often amplified intuition that unpredictable and unplanned side effects of current technical practice may represent a great danger. Traditional understanding of technology as organized order of work, as a neutral entity dependent on this order, is nowadays “terribly mistaken”.

It is based on protagorean view of man as a “deficient being” and human transformational technical practice is justified as counterbalance to human deficiency. Therefore the finding that “mysterious” *power of new technology* may rest in the hands of people with great technical skills and unimaginable financial (and political) possibilities but with (often) extremely poor moral dispositions is very disturbing. Equally disturbing is another finding, according to which this aspect of technicalization (an ambiguous term, here used as an equivalent to technological *development* and technological *changes*) is not sufficiently studied.

As we already know, technology represents potential danger not only to present generation but also to life as such and to the gene pool. One of the eternal moral-philosophical questions is, whether people have the obligation to protect the gene pool from the harmful effects of chemical and nuclear technologies for the sake of future generations. Other ethical questions concerning technological development relate to dangers not only to present and future generations of people, but also to nonhuman inhabitants of the planet. How can socioeconomic benefits of technology be balanced with ecological and environmental problems? According to E. O. Wilson [18], current pace at which plants and animals disappear is approximately a thousand times faster than it used to be in the period before massive intervention of man in the biosphere.

Some theorists evaluating impact of technology assert that people have the obligation to prevent the interference of technology with basic structures and functions of the natural world. This assertion bears on the obligation of people to preserve biotic integrity of the holistic natural world rather than to protect only individual species. Other moral philosophers believe that nature does not have an intrinsic value and that the justification of the protection of nature against the threats of technology stems from human emotions. Still others think that it is not realistic to try to preserve biotic integrity of the holistic natural world because society has to use technology to satisfy the needs of humanity and holistic environmental views do not adequately secure the well-being of individual human beings.

Even if these philosophers defend principles such as “respect nature”, it is evident that their principles imply a postulate pursuing their own benefits, rather than an absolute postulate against their violation, while shifting the burden of proof to those who attempt to violate them.

In this sphere, our thinking may often be led astray by the ongoing oscillations of opinions and relevant information and knowledge resulting from open discourses may be counterproductively taken over by radical proposals of “solution” to many inalienably enriching enhancements of science and technology. For instance, techno-optimistic scenarios rely on market economy and technology to solve a whole range of problems. The solution is believed to be found by means of new discoveries, or maybe by means of creation of “natural capitalism” [19] which will become an arbiter of salvation due to voluntary “dematerialization of economy” and miracles of technical innovation. The idea of economy using synergy more effectively and offering more work opportunities with a reduced material consumption is relevant for every improvement and for elimination of overconsumption. However, this “dematerializing” solution concerns only a limited range of studied issues. The word “natural” in the term “natural capitalism” implies a shift of capitalism towards technology with a waste material limitation while this shift is “natural”, i.e. without any political (or other) effort, which is not taken into consideration by supporters of “natural capitalism”. Is it possible for global capitalism to proceed in this direction on its own accord, if it is moving towards opposite direction at present? Increasing social responsibility is evidently not the basis which sets direction to the rationality of capitalism. To claim the opposite, i.e. that no political and democratic effort will be needed to redirect the rationality of capitalism is either naïve or reprehensibly misleading. Reliance on “natural”, “green” and other capitalism negates the need of systematic action or profound reevaluation. It simply shifts out of sight the solution to problems which are not primarily technical but predominantly social, political or cultural-symbolic.

It is evident that we live in the world of “clever” means and not entirely reasonable aims. In this context it seems that the role of critically oriented pro-natural theory consists in, inter alia, “reconciliation of reason and nature”.

A substantial part of postmodern and ecological thinking at the end of the 20th century reversed the hierarchy reason-nature and in contrast to the period of Enlightenment, nature became privileged as a result of demonization of reason. This tendency is manifested in the seminal work of Vandana Shiva [20]. Without suggesting any knowledge of Horkheimer and Adorno’s criticism of the dialectics of Enlightenment, Shiva almost reproduces it: “the age of Enlightenment and the theory of progress to which it gave rise, was centred on the sacredness of two categories: modern scientific knowledge and economic development. Somewhere along the way the unbridled pursuit of progress, guided by science and technology, began to destroy life...Throughout the world, a new questioning is growing, rooted in the experience of those for whom the spread of what was called “Enlightenment” has been the spread of darkness, of the extinction of life and life-enhancing processes” [20:38].

However, in her criticism V. Shiva relegates all western reason to scientific reason and therefore she does not consider an alternative approach to science, based on other forms of reason. V. Shiva turns to the ancient Indian version of Mother Nature, “the old Indian worldview in which nature is *Prakriti*, a living and creative process, a feminine principle, from which all life arises” [20:38-54]. It is necessary to say that we take her approach as illustrative rather than critical. Even ingenious thinkers who are painfully aware of the dichotomies of western thinking and their sinister consequences, are likely to privilege nature, thus reintroducing the problematic dichotomous way of structuring the world.

It is appropriate to conclude our reflection by saying that the tale about our ecological thinking and acting cannot be the tale about our perfection or about a perfect picture of nature. It can serve as a “manual” on how to act and how not to act, with the hope that our actions are guided by the good (correct) intention and understanding or in other words, by identification of fundamental contextual constraints on justification, which is the basis of application (practice).

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